

# WILDLIFE DAMAGE PROGRAM

**Authorization:** ss. 29.885 and 29.889, Wis. Stats.

**Budget:** Funding is dependent upon the number of hunting licenses issued each year.  
2001-02 Fiscal Year = \$3.5 million (est.)  
2002-03 Fiscal Year = \$3.3 million (est.)  
2003-04 Fiscal Year = \$3.4 million (est.)

NOTE: A \$1 surcharge on all hunting licenses sold generates roughly \$1.0 million a year for use on wildlife damage and abatement. A new \$12 resident and \$20 nonresident bonus deer permit fee generated \$2.5 million in FY 02, \$2.2 million in FY 03 and \$2.3 million in FY04. New in 2002, purchasers of hunting licenses can donate an additional \$1, or more, to the deer donation program.

**Objective:** Establish a county-administered wildlife damage abatement and claims program to assist landowners with excessive levels of agricultural crop damage from deer, bears, geese, elk or turkeys.

**Eligibility and Applications:** Counties are eligible to participate after passing a resolution endorsing participation and completing a DNR-approved plan of administration. A person is required; to file a statement of claim with the department on a form acceptable to the department within 14 days after the wildlife damage first occurs, to have hunting access control, and to implement recommended abatement measures.

**Level of Assistance:** 100% of county administration costs and 75% of abatement projects are reimbursable. Damage claims (\$250 deductible) up to \$15,000 may also be paid if funding is sufficient.

**Priorities:** Monies are allocated based on a statewide tiered priority system:

- ◆ County administrative costs
- ◆ Abatement cost
- ◆ Damage claim payment
- ◆ Deer donation program

**Eligible Types of Projects:** The type of wildlife damage that is eligible for wildlife damage claim payments shall be limited to damage to commercial seedlings or crops growing on agricultural land, damage to crops that have been harvested for sale or further use but have not been removed from the agricultural land, damage to orchard trees or nursery stock or damage to apiaries or livestock.

**History:** In 2003, 70 counties participated in the program which paid 614 claims reflecting \$2,404,997 in appraised losses, with \$1,838,553 eligible for payment, and assisted with abatement projects totaling \$312,745. The county administration costs were \$957,266. In 2003, 53 counties participated in the deer donation program with a total cost of \$460,972. A total of 6,771 deer were donated, generating roughly 305,000 lbs. of ground venison that was distributed to local food pantries.

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